

LIFE *in* **ACTION**

**365 Days of Discovering
True Life Through
Abiding in Christ**

by **LIFE ACTION**

Life in
ACTION

**Abundant Life.
Radical Action.**

365 DAYS
OF DEVOTION

by LIFE ACTION

*“Return to me, and I will return to you,
says the LORD of hosts” (Malachi 3:7).*

Are you responsive to God? In a world of noise, anxieties, and untamed thoughts, God’s voice may seem faint. Our own spiritual indifference is generally the culprit. We’ve trained ourselves to ignore His promptings.

Perhaps you’ve allowed yourself to drift. You do have every intention of returning fully to God someday, but you want to go just a little farther in your chosen direction, under your own power. God can wait.

Frankly, such thinking is as foolish as it is sinful. Why would we ignore the One who loves us and longs for us to enjoy Him?

Prior to the Welsh Revival (1904–05), Evan Roberts became greatly concerned over the spiritual indifference of the church. He began preaching a four-point sermon that invited the lost to salvation and the backslidden to personal revival. The points were:

1. Confess all known sin, receiving forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
2. Remove anything in your life that you are in doubt or feel unsure about.
3. Be ready to obey the Holy Spirit instantly.
4. Publicly confess the Lord Jesus Christ.

Over 150,000 were converted, and countless lives were transformed. Nothing is gained by ignoring God. To delay responding to Him is to postpone the very joy, peace, and rest that our souls yearn for.

YOUR LIFE IN ACTION

Do you need to respond to God in light of any of Evan Roberts’ four points? What do you need to do?

*“You looked for much, and behold, it came to little.
And when you brought it home, I blew it away.
Why? declares the LORD of hosts.
Because of my house that lies in ruins,
while each of you busies himself with his own house” (Haggai 1:9).*

Delayed obedience is disobedience. Spiritual procrastination—the idea of saying, *Yes, God . . . but tomorrow, not today*—unmasks a stubborn heart rather than a surrendered one.

In the early days of a new year, many of us are thinking about ways we want to change. We love the idea of new beginnings. Yet in the making of resolutions and commitments, of launching ourselves into new or renewed disciplines, we should ask, *Are my priorities God’s priorities?*

Haggai describes God taking issue with His procrastinating people. This was a season of national restoration; the people were returning to their homeland after years in exile. God had lifted their burden.

But rather than responding in grateful obedience, they rushed back into the life they wanted, rebuilding, planting, harvesting, working. But God’s house stayed in ruins. Worship was put on hold. The temple ruins eventually blended into the landscape, turning neither heads nor hearts . . . all because of spiritual procrastination.

Take caution as you think of ways you want to change or improve in this New Year. Remember that holy intent without godly action is really nothing more than self-indulgence. Put nothing—*nothing*—above seeking God with all your heart. Say to Him, *Yes, God . . . today.*

YOUR LIFE IN ACTION

Are your priorities God’s priorities? In what ways have you been intending to obey God, but have not yet done so?

*I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you
will bring it to completion
at the day of Jesus Christ (Philippians 1:6).*

God is not a quitter. He finishes everything He starts. Think of the implications this truth holds for you personally.

Philippians 1:6 points to the greatest promise of God's follow-through, that His saving you began a work that He will complete. It is a sanctifying work with no pauses or stops.

We should be both humbled and encouraged that God has taken our spiritual maturation upon Himself rather than leaving it to our best efforts. We did nothing to gain God's affection; salvation is a gift, not a prize. God initiated, we responded. And as it was with salvation, so it is with sanctification. It is God's work continued.

You may have grown cold toward Christ in comparison to where you once were, but you have not stopped His work in you. God is more committed to your spiritual formation than you will ever be, even on your most spiritually vibrant day.

Oh, the blessed rest that comes through knowing that God's work will continue in us and will be completed! God does not pick us up, wind us up, and drop us off. His presence is constant, and His activating grace is unending.

YOUR LIFE IN ACTION

Who or what are you truly relying on today for your growth as a Christian? If it is not Christ Himself, then acknowledge your need of Him, and thank Him for His faithfulness.

*It is God who works in you, both to will and to work
for his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).*

What you need is not another of your own pep talks, conjuring up the spiritual motivation to do, say, and think the right things today. Here's a reminder that will prove much more inspirational: "It is God who works in you."

Here the Scripture speaks of *work* as the evidential progress of our salvation, not things we must do to become or remain a Christian. "To work for his good pleasure" refers to works the body of Christ does to spiritually mature and to advance the gospel. Every Christ follower has work to do. What is yours?

We want to do works that please God ("to work"), and we want to *want to* do works that please Him ("to will"), yet we often take it upon ourselves to try to muster holy intent, to coax ourselves into godly behavior. But we don't have to do that. God provides the compulsion along with the capacity. Ours is not a need for self-motivation, but for quieting our heart and embracing what God has already put there.

Philippians 2:12 instructs us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." Clearly, willing and working for God's good pleasure are not matters to take lightly. They are God's means of displaying His glory to the world, like a light in a dark house or a city on a hill (Matthew 5:14-16). Give yourself over to God that He might show Himself through your circumstances, whether a cause to engage, a task to complete, a person to love, or a challenge to endure.

YOUR LIFE IN ACTION

What is the work God is giving you to do that will display His glory to the world?